



By Shane Peck

Enhancing Missouri



Why does the Missouri Department of Transportation **build bike trails, construct sidewalks** and **plant shrubs** instead of using that money to fill potholes?

This question is asked frequently by Missourians throughout the state. The answer is simple. **The money MoDOT uses on these projects cannot be used for highway maintenance or construction.** Missouri benefits from the program by preserving parts of history, making communities more attractive, offering transit options for disabled citizens and providing safe pedestrian and bike routes to schools.

In 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush. ISTEA created the Transportation Enhancement Program. It mandated that Missouri and other states spend at least 10 percent of highway funds on “enhancement” projects.

Projects eligible for enhancement funds under ISTEA included improvements such

as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; preservation of historic transportation structures; landscaping and scenic beautification; regulating billboards and other outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; and control of water pollution related to highway runoff. The money designated for these purposes could not be used for filling potholes or four-laning highways.

The enhancement program was continued in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century enacted by President Bill Clinton in 1998. Under TEA-21, approximately \$95.4 million was available for projects that enhanced Missouri’s transportation system for federal fiscal years 1998-2003.

MoDOT has allocated all but a small portion of the funding it had available for

enhancement projects through TEA-21. The department is currently awaiting passage of another six-year transportation bill to determine new funding levels and program requirements. Congress is considering several transportation packages with passage of a bill expected later this year.

Under the current law, MoDOT has awarded enhancement funds to local entities (typically city or county governments) through a competitive process while keeping some funding for bike/pedestrian facilities and to enhance highway and bridge projects. In order to qualify for the funding, projects have to meet certain eligibility requirements.

Past criteria stated that the project had to fall within one of 11 possible transportation-enhancement-fund categories such as those mentioned previously. Projects also had to

Funds that Keep Missouri Rolling and Strolling

Enhancement funds are important to building and maintaining bicycle and pedestrian trails. Federal law prohibits these funds from being used for road maintenance or construction, so the Missouri Department of Transportation channels them toward facilities that all Missouri citizens can use. Here’s a look at some recently completed people-powered successes across the state.

North

- Sidewalks are now along a short segment of Route 6 in St. Joseph, from Interstate 29 to Woodbine Road. The project also

included adding sidewalks to the Route 6 bridge over I-29.

- In Fayette, new sidewalks were constructed at the local school and college.
- In Moberly, a 10-foot wide asphalt hike/bike trail was built for pedestrians.
- The Ninth Street Bridge, which crosses a railroad track in Trenton, has a new pedestrian walkway and fence.
- New sidewalk projects are under way in the communities of Carrollton, Sweet Springs, Bosworth, Green City and Milan.
- Bear Creek Trail in Hannibal, a half-mile shared-use trail that will become part of an extensive trail network, has been completed.

- Warrenton is designing a shared-use facility along Route 47 to connect several residential areas.
- Planning efforts are under way to complete the Mississippi River Trail from Hannibal to Iowa.
- Route 54 in Audrain County from Mexico east to Route 19 will receive shoulder improvements to more safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Kansas City

- Preliminary construction is completed in Cass County on Route 71 and Route 7 preparing for a bike trail.
- A new interchange at Green Hills Road in Platte County over Route 152 now





The St. James/Meramec trail



Mark Twain rockscape, Hannibal



Katy depot, Sedalia

have a direct relationship to the intermodal transportation system in terms of function, proximity or impact; had to be open to the public in perpetuity; and had to involve activities over and above normal transportation practices.

Entities that wished to sponsor local transportation-enhancement projects had to be

government or public agencies. Additionally, the sponsors had to provide a 20 percent match for any funds used on a project. At the same time, the projects needed to meet a minimum score through the competitive judging process.

Since getting started in 1991, enhancement funds have supplied millions of dollars to improve and develop 345 projects across

the state, ranging from bike-ped facilities to restoring historical buildings. ■

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Rolling and Strolling

accommodates bicycles on the shoulder and has bike-friendly grates.

- The Blue Ridge Boulevard bridge over Route 40 in Independence was reconstructed with bike-friendly grates.
- In Cass County, 2 miles of new sidewalks along both sides of Route 58 are under construction.
- Grates for 1 mile along Route 12 are being replaced to safely accommodate bicycles in Independence.

St. Louis

- The Page Path is open in St. Louis County to 1,000 feet short of the Missouri River bridge.
- In Maryland Heights, a bike trail has been constructed around the south end of Creve Coeur Lake and in Creve Coeur Park.

Central

- Fulton completed the second phase of the Stinson Creek Trail, a paved multi-use path providing safe transportation for a variety of users.
- Jefferson City is constructing a sidewalk project from the Greenway Trail to the South Elementary School entrance.

South

- Another phase of Cassville's pedestrian-trail project was completed in December 2003. The 10-foot wide, 3,200-foot long asphalt pathway is essential to the interconnectivity of the greenway system linking three city parks.
- In Nevada last fall, a new sidewalk-system along Business Route 71 was completed.
- A new bridge replacing an old structure over Turkey Creek in Jasper County was completed last fall.
- The construction of a two-phase multi-use path in Butler for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists along a mile of Fort Scott Street was finished last summer.
- The 5-mile Frisco Highline Trail extension from Springfield into Willard celebrated with a ribbon cutting last October.
- In downtown Springfield, the Jordan Valley Parking Garage – providing 974 parking spaces, bike lockers and a bike rack – opened in September 2003. This is part of a downtown redevelopment that also includes a greenway trail system.

- Construction will soon begin on the Ward Branch Greenway Trail, a 10-foot wide asphalt walking trail along the Ward Branch of the James River in Springfield.
- Share the Road signs were installed on Route Y in Forsyth to alert motorists to expect bicyclists on this scenic route.
- St. James completed the first phase, about 2 miles, of the St. James-Meramec Iron Works Trail project last fall. Two more miles are planned for 2004.
- St. James also completed a comprehensive plan in 1999 for walking and biking paths, resulting in a nine-phase development plan for the St. James Meramec Iron Works Trail – an 8-mile hard surface, shared-use path.
- In Fisk, a sidewalk was constructed that extends north along McKinley Avenue and winds through several streets providing safer accommodations for pedestrians.